

Co-Operative Farm Products Marketing

How It Is Done in Europe and May Be Done in America to the Profit of Both Farmer and Consumer

By MATTHEW S. DUDGEON.

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Inspection of a Danish Creamery.

WHY CO-OPERATION SOMETIMES FAILS

Copenhagen, Denmark.—Co-operation is not foolproof, consequently it does not always succeed. Inexperience, incompetence, and dishonesty will wreck any private business and they will, of course, wreck any co-operative business. It is necessary, therefore, for enthusiasts to remember that there is no mystic virtue in co-operation which enables it to triumph at all times. Those of us who are trying to record what we have seen of co-operative business at home and in Europe, would not be treating the public fairly if we left the impression that there are no failures among co-operative enterprises.

Both at home and abroad there have been many failures. Certainly those interested are entitled to know as much about the failures as about the successes. They are entitled to know also what causes have led to co-operative failure.

Failures in America. Many co-operative stores organized with much promise have failed. Generally speaking gross incompetence has wrecked them. They are like other mercantile establishments in that they demand, as a condition precedent to success, skilled management, good business methods, good accounting, cautious extension of credit, as well as some special knowledge of the goods dealt in. If they lack any of these essentials is inevitable. As the average co-operative store in America is organized its members are seldom bound by any agreement to do all their trading at the co-operative concern. They patronize it when it interests them. If the goods offered are poor, or if bad management advances the price unduly, or if frequent minor mistakes occur, the members abandon the venture like a sinking ship.

As I have said, co-operative stores in order to succeed must have skilled management, good business methods, good accounting systems, and must extend credit cautiously, all in addition to the special knowledge essential in every such enterprise. So far as I can discover, however, the stores which have failed have done so only because one or two of these essentials of success but they seem often to have lacked all of them. More than once it has happened that a co-operative store company is formed because some storekeeper has lost all his money in an unsuccessful mercantile venture and can secure capital for a new venture only in this way. Sometimes an ambitious farmer has organized a company in order that a son who has been away to business college and feels above farming may have a chance to earn a living without working upon the farm. It is characteristic also of co-operative American stores—and of other co-operative concerns in America also—that they have seldom been willing to pay a salary sufficient to secure men of experience and skill as managers.

When a co-operative store managed by a man who has a history of nothing but business failures behind him, or by a youthful and inexperienced business college graduate, or by any other man of the low grade implied in the low salaries paid, comes into competition with a store managed by an experienced storekeeper of the aggressive vigorous type often found in even the smaller towns, the mere word "co-operative" upon the sign in front of the store is not going to avert failure. It is fair to expect too much of co-operation.

Co-operative Fruit Failures. Seldom, too, have so-called American co-operative companies been co-operative in the true sense of the word. I have in mind one co-operative fruit marketing society which failed largely because it was organized on the joint-stock plan, and admitted as any other non-co-operative corporation. A few of the larger shareholders controlled it. The interests of the minority were ignored. They became jealous and suspicious and accused those in control of dishonesty. Finally they demanded complete transparency in a full report of all their financial transactions and that an auditing committee be appointed. The officers foolishly and arbitrarily refused to concede even an audit unless they themselves selected the committee. Then costly legal battles were waged and the society was wrecked. The principle applied to that for the future they might protect their own interests. This also was denied them. The only course possible seemed to be a separation and the larger stockholders withdrew, the larger stockholders buying out those who did not care to stay in the concern. While this society did not fail from a financial standpoint, its record is of course to be

heard that there were great corners in the United States, and by buying and storing grain men had made enormous fortunes. There was to be gold for everyone who wanted it. A careful study of the situation has revealed the absurdity of the situation. Those who controlled the warehouses could not control to exceed one-twentieth of the supply of grain grown in Germany alone.

The general consensus of German opinion seems to have been that two causes contributed to the failure; first, state aid, which seldom really helps a co-operative society, ruined these projects by encouraging the construction of warehouses which were either not needed or which were bigger than needed; second, the members sought to make money out of them instead of using them simply to prevent waste in shipping.

Bank at Nieder Mabbau. In 1974 at a German village of some 620 inhabitants local tradesmen formed a loan and savings bank. From the very first they forgot that co-operative credit banks are primarily formed to lend money only to those co-operative members who will use it for local purposes. They were too anxious to get rich quick. By a promise of exceedingly high rates of interest they attracted patrons from the most remote points until there was no deposit in this little village co-operative bank almost \$1,000,000. Such an amount of money was of course far in excess of any needs which the members themselves might have as borrowers. Consequently the bank began to do business with outsiders. There were a plentiful number of demands relatively so small that it granted to its debtors excessive credits. It became known that credit could easily be obtained at that village bank and speculators far and near flocked to it. It risked its money in financial schemes outside the limits of the village. It loaned to speculators who were dealers in vacant lots in other cities which had only speculative values. It went so far as to make loans upon second mortgages, and even on third mortgages.

The cashier, who had no particular fitness for the position, also had charge of church funds and other public funds. Besides this, he was conducting a large business in a hotel. There seems to have been no one on the board of managers of any particular business judgment or ability. Even integrity was not present, for the cashier ended his year with forged and sent to prison. It was not surprising, therefore, that in December, 1911, the Nieder Mabbau Loans and Savings bank was declared insolvent. The result of the failure was the spirit of speculation, of incompetence, and of dishonesty.

Co-operative Bank at Darmstadt. More recently the co-operative agricultural bank at Darmstadt, formed in 1882, reached a point where it was unable to meet its obligations. The situation was almost the same as that of the Nieder Mabbau bank, although it operated upon a much larger scale. In connection with this bank there was also either gross incompetence or dishonesty. In one case, for example, over a million dollars was invested in a mine that could not be worked. Other equally hazardous enterprises were financed by this concern contrary to all principles of co-operative credit and equally contrary to all rules of sound finance. "Co-operative banks are not foolproof," and of course the co-operative bank at Darmstadt failed.

Co-operation may fail even in Denmark, the country in all Europe most completely organized for rural business. There a brilliant public man got the good graces of those interested in co-operation and promoted a scheme for uniting many co-operative societies in one big concern. Here there was not so much incompetence as dishonesty, and the venture ended in financial failure for the members—and in imprisonment for the dishonest promoter.

Causes of Failures in America. Co-operative failures in America, as in Europe, are concerned largely by these causes:

In the first place it has always been difficult for the American to comprehend the fact that co-operative concerns are not money making, dividend declaring, profit producing concerns. They do not seem to realize that the sole excuse for the existence of the co-operative organization as a middleman is in order that a middleman's function may be performed without waste and without profit.

In the second place the spirit of the American farmer is not sufficiently unselfish. He has been operating for so long on the competitive basis that it is difficult for him to acquire a spirit of unselfish loyalty to the organization to which he belongs. If an opportunity presents itself under which he can not profit by abandoning the co-operative society and dealing with a private dealer, he embraces it at once, without realizing that in the end this will ruin his co-operative concern and leave him the hands of the privately owned dealer who has been generations working him for large profits.

In the third place, practically all the American concerns which have failed have been organized on the joint-stock plan. With the voting power distributed in proportion to the capital invested it has often occurred that the interests of those who were in control of the majority of the stock were antagonistic to the interests of the smaller stockholders, who contributed to the success by bringing in a large part of the produce handled by the concern. As a result the policy of the co-operative concern has often ignored the interests of the producer if the concern was a marketing one, or the interests of the distributor if the concern was a distributing organization.

In the fourth place, the American farmer has not yet had a sufficiently far-seeing vision to realize that it often pays to invest a considerable salary in a skilled manager. They hesitate to pay a salary which would demand the attention of anyone who had sufficient experience and skill successfully to manage the business. As a result, co-operation has suffered from ignorance and mismanagement.

MADE MONEY AT "BUSINESS"

Pickpocket's Nefarious Occupation Lucrative But Wound Up in Inevitable Disaster.

Although he is eighty years of age and has spent nearly half a century in prison, Adolf Schaefer, who says he is the oldest pickpocket in the world, was caught in Berlin in the act of trying to steal an omnibus passenger's purse. When the octogenarian, who is of highly respectable appearance, was

heard that there were great corners in the United States, and by buying and storing grain men had made enormous fortunes. There was to be gold for everyone who wanted it. A careful study of the situation has revealed the absurdity of the situation. Those who controlled the warehouses could not control to exceed one-twentieth of the supply of grain grown in Germany alone.

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brought before the magistrate a remarkable story was told. It was said that the old man had lately been living in a home for aged people. He received permission to leave on telling the officials that, as he had decided to marry and "settle down," he wished to earn a little money to provide a home for his future bride.

He resorted, however, to his old pursuit of pocket-picking, and when arrested he was found to be in possession of a notebook in which he had scrupulously entered all his "earn-

ings" as a sneak thief during the last 30 years, says the Boston Transcript. The book showed that, after allowing \$350 a year for living expenses, he should have been in enjoyment of a sum of \$11,000, as his receipts totaled \$21,500.

Cleveland club women to the number of 10,000 indorsed the bill for a woman manager inspector.

It's much easier to buy experience than it is to sell it.

Powder for Sitting Hen.

The sitting hen should have her plumage filled full of lice-killing powder when she is first put on the nest and again on the seventh and seventh days of incubation.

Caponizing Surplus Males.

Should your chicks turn out to be mostly roosters and not happen to be early enough to capture the high prices for spring chicks, turn them into capons; the price is good and the market is never supplied.

Well-Bred Poultry.

Do not despise well-bred poultry. No poultry has ever been noted for poultry products unless well-bred fowls were the rule.

Silo for Summer.

Summer silos on the average farms should have smaller diameters than those used in winter feeding.

Time for Planting.

It is safest to plant all kinds of nursery stock in the spring.

Planting Radish Seed.

Plant radish seed every ten days so you will have fresh, tender ones for a long season.

Less Drakes Required.

Where breeding ducks have access to bathing water a less number of drakes are required.

Feed for Grazing.

Rye is sometimes sown early in the spring for grazing purposes. It grows very fast on good soil and under the influence of the spring rains and sun.

Overfeeding Hens.

Overfeeding the hens causes the majority of cases of indigestion, bowel trouble, diseases of the liver and other ailments of the intestines and crop.

Chick's First Food.

A healthy chick as it emerges from the shell absorbs into the abdomen what remains of the yolk of the egg. This is nature's provision of food for the first few hours of a chick's life.

Value of Farm Hen.

The peculiar value of the farm hen is that she is free to range over the premises where she can pick up anything from a tenth to one-half of what she eats in the warm months.

Water is Neglected.

Some men never think of giving their hogs clean, cold water, but make them get along with the liquids they find in the slops. This is a serious mistake.

Feeds for Results.

The best chick feeds contain a number of grains and seeds in a cleaned state and from the best of grains. These are the feeds that will give results, and the additional cost over the cheaper product repays the poultry raiser many times in both the saving of chicks and their better development.

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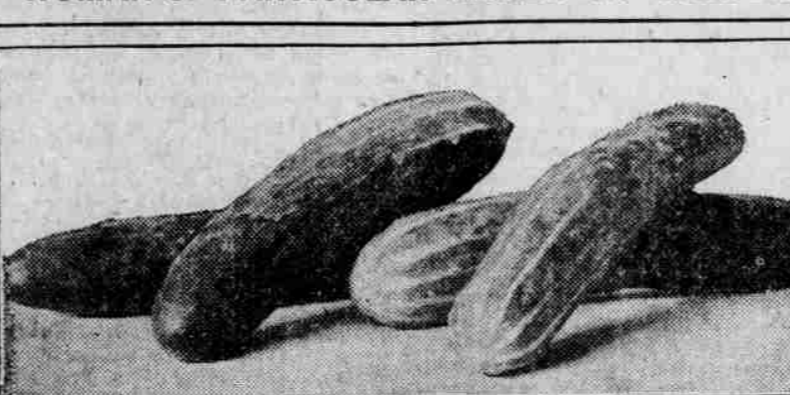
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THE TRIBUNE'S FARM PAGE

Each week contains at least one idea, Mr. Farmer, that means more Dollars in YOUR pocket. The idea is on this page—look for it, you will find many other suggestions for better farming on

FULTON COUNTY FARMS

WOMAN'S PARTICULAR HOBBY IN GARDEN



One of the Earliest Vegetables to Grow—The Spineless Cucumber—Fine for Pickles.

(By KATHERINE A. GRIMES.) Everyone has some particular hobby to work out when it comes to gardening. Mine is pickles. My family is at the bottom of this, however, for there is nothing they will all relish so much through the winter as these tart or spicy appetizers. I know that when fall comes I must have a cellar-cupboard full of pickles of every sort and description, sweet and sour and chopped, spiced and plain, separate and mixed, to say nothing of chow chow, chili sauce, catsup and the like. So I plan my gardening accordingly. Of course I raise other things, but it, too, but pickles are my main crop.

The first thing I plant in the spring is onions. There are few kinds of pickles where some member of the "fragrant tribe" does not come in handy. I sow my onion seed thickly in the mustard and spiced pickles. When fall comes I have quantities of onions about the right size for those kinds of pickles in which I like to use them whole. Or they may be sown thickly in a bed. They are, however, harder to keep free from weeds when sown in this way. From the seed I get plenty of onions to use sliced or chopped in the various pickle mixtures.

Cabbage is another pickling staple that should be sown early. Those own cousins to the cabbage, cauliflower and collards, are also invaluable for pickles. I must not forget the radish, which should not be forgotten. The late hard-headed varieties of cabbage are best for this purpose, as they are whiter and more tender than the earlier sorts.

There are so many kinds of pickles that need tomatoes that liberal quantities must be made for these. For this purpose I like some smooth, small fruited variety, preferably a little on the late side. Yellow tomatoes make the most delicious of all sweet spiced pickles; and it is well to remember that there is nothing finer than this same fruit for preserves.

Tomatoes for pickling may be sown in the hills where they are to grow as soon as there is no more danger from the frost. They will be plenty early enough in ripening. In another section of the garden is the backbone of the whole pickle business. One can hardly have too many of them, so they may be planted and replanted as long as the season will allow.

If the bugs get after them, use a little kerosene to dust them, and the pests will leave. It is a good thing to mix a little sulphur in the dirt around the hills. Unless the bugs are more than usually troublesome, it is a pretty sure preventive.

There should be at least three kinds of peppers sown, the "bull-eyes," which are best used green for pickles, the small potted red pepper, valuable either green or ripe for mixing with onions, cucumbers and the like, and the large red pepper which should be allowed to ripen, and is then sliced through the sour cucumber pickles to give them the proper flavor.

One does not need more than half a dozen plants of each variety, but that number should be provided without fail. They may be bought from a market-gardener, if one is sure of getting the right kinds, but the surest way to get what one wants is to raise them in window boxes.

They should be set out rather early, as they require a long season. How many use the little green seed pods of the early radishes for mixed pickles? They are very nice, having a slight peppery flavor, something like green beans. They should be picked before they begin to get tough. If not ready to use them just then, drop them in a jar of brine and they will be all right to use any time. I let my first planting of radishes go to seed for this purpose.

Then there are beans. As a rule, people do not appreciate the value of these for pickling. They are nice used either by themselves or in mixtures of various sorts.

There are several varieties of pole beans that can be depended on to bear much of the pickling work. They are ready to use at any time. The two I like the best are the Kentucky Wonder and the Louisiana Cuthbert. The former has a large pod, and is fine to pickle separately. The latter is small, tender and fleshy, and is excellent for mixed pickles, especially those put up in mustard dressing. Either of these may be planted early, and will bear steadily hot months, sending out new runners all the time.

Citrons, watermelons, cantaloupes, and beets are other pickling possibilities. No one with an eye to the future, will overlook part or all of these at garden-making time.

In years when fruit is scarce, a little foresight at planting time will furnish many excellent substitutes to fill the otherwise empty cellar.

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FARM SPRAYING PUMP

KEEP BUILDINGS SANITARY BY USE OF WHITEWASH.

All Structures Should Be Kept Sweet and Clean by the Liberal and Frequent Application of Some Good Disinfectant.

Sanitary methods are now a part of the day's work on modern farms. Barns, hog pens, dairy buildings, every farm building, in fact, should be kept sweet and fresh and clean by a liberal and frequent application of whitewash or some good disinfectant. Poultry buildings, in particular, should receive special care to prevent lice and mites taking away all the profits from the poultry.

Good disinfectants destroy the germs of contagious diseases, the external parasites, such as lice and mites, and the embryos of intestinal worms. Disinfectants should be thoroughly applied to the interior of the houses, worked into all the cracks and crevices, spread over the ceiling and the floor, the roosts, dropping boards, and nest boxes. At the same time, the feeding and drinking troughs should be disinfected by pouring boiling water into them and drying them in the sun. The disinfectants are most easily applied to the walls and ceilings with a spray pump. A hand pump should be on every farm—it is useful for spraying small trees as well as buildings.

Not much use to spray the chicken house and roost unless every bit of surface is covered, because the pestiferous lice breed rapidly and if one inch of this space is left uncovered great colonies will quickly spring up.

WAYS OF PRESERVING TOOLS

Simply Wipe Implements With Piece of Waste Dipped in Grease Whenever They Get Wet.

A simple way to preserve tools is given by Paul Sladky, instructor in mechanical practice, at the University of Wisconsin. It is simply to wipe all tools with a piece of waste or a rag, dipped in cup grease, every time they get damp. Machine oil, while not as good as grease, owing to the fact that it dries up fast, will also serve the purpose.

"Water and damp are the worst enemies of tools," says Mr. Sladky, "but any one who will take a little trouble when they become wet will be paid by having tools last at least twice as long."

"The farmer is the worst sufferer from rusty and decayed tools. He must take them out under all sorts of conditions, and many times a year gets them wet. For that reason you seldom see a farm without its quota of rusty and misused tools. All for lack of a little effort. The mechanic and the farmer have the same trouble as the farmer. In many cases he works inside and many others he is working outside in oil or grease. If working outside he has the same problem to meet."

"The only remedy for the tool that is rusty is to rub it with a little emery. Often the rust can be taken off it at least. The tool will always be rough, however, and not bright and shiny."

Good Green Food.

As soon as it is possible to spade the ground you should spade some and sow oats for the little chicks. When this gets up say two or three inches let the chicks out in it for half an hour or so. If you see that they are tramping it down too fast cut their time shorter in the oat patch. The oats will grow quickly and give the birds a lot of green food besides providing the soil where the chickens have been running.

Demand for Fresh Eggs.

There is always a ready market for the strictly fresh eggs, at figures above the regular quotations. Far too large a number of eggs go into the open market of the big cities that it is from what they should be, and this class of goods often sells at the real fresh hen fruit. At no time is the market glutted with high-grade eggs, and this applies to good poultry as well.

Feeds for Results.

The best chick feeds contain a number of grains and seeds in a cleaned state and from the best of grains. These are the feeds that will give results, and the additional cost over the cheaper product repays the poultry raiser many times in both the saving of chicks and their better development